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ABSTRACT

When health occupations teachers are not able to leave their teaching jobs to obtain much needed clinical updating, alternatives must be found. The method of linking with local health care facilities to provide clinical updating for health occupations teachers is not perfect and has not been rated as the most effective. Clinical updating workshops do, however, provide teachers with experiences to which they might not otherwise have access because of their involvement with the supervision of their students. The Florida Department of Education offers summer updating workshops in five regions of the state. Participants design their own course of study based upon their own needs. They are also required to complete a course project usually involving the development of lesson plans and related materials to be used in their programs. From the participants' point of view, this method meets their needs and provides them with useful information that they can incorporate in their curriculum. (YLB)

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Linking Up with Local Health Care Facilities to Provide Clinical Updating for Health Occupations Teachers

A concept paper presented to the Health Occupations Division participants at the American Vocational Association's Convention December 8, 1985. Atlanta, Georgia.

by

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Linking Up with Local Health Care Facilities to Provide Clinical Updating for Health Occupations Teachers

The concept of technical updating of vocational teachers has been a topic battered about since the early days of Vocational Education. Recently, this topic received indepth study by James B. Hamilton and Michael E. Wonacott as reported in two publications completed for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (R & D 241 and 242). These publications not only describe the programs and practices but provide a strategy for action. At first it was not as important as it is today in the 1980's. In recent years, the vocational areas have changed dramatically as reflected in the job specifications as well as in the curriculums and method of delivery of instruction. "At the same time that technological change is occurring in the workplace at unparalleled rates, the amount of time that the average secondary or postsecondary vocational teacher has been in the teaching profession - and hence, away from the workplace - is increasing." (Hamilton and Wonacott, Updating Teachers for Tomorrow's Technology: A Strategy for Action.)

However, many teachers have not been able to change as rapidly as their discipline. The reasons are many - no time, no money, no opportunity, but the fact is becoming more and more clear - Opportunities for teachers to return to their vocational area without the concern for students is becoming a high priority. This topic was rated # 2 among teacher professional concerns in a study done by the Teacher Concerns Committee of the American Vocational Association. (Corwin & Sandiford. VocEd.

Jan/Feb 1984). This is particularly true in fields where high technology dominates such as electronics, automotive and health occupations. Job activities, skills and technology have changed so rapidly that once professionals leave their discipline, they feel outdated and in need of updating within 5 years. To say you never forget basic skills may be correct but it is difficult to convince professionals that this is true.

Finding the most effective means of updating has been a challenge of vocational teachers. Many Health Occupations Teachers continue to work in the hospital setting on a part time basis even after they have been teaching for several years. The demands of the teaching profession, their families, and course work become secondary to the real or felt need to "keep in touch." Conducting the most effective means of updating becomes a challenge of University Teacher Education Programs where meeting certification and degree requirements tend to require a high priority.

In Florida, officials at the Department of Education recognize the importance of technical updating for vocational teachers and have been generous with funds to Universities to offer technical updating workshops for teachers during the summer months. Each year since the early 1980's, Clinical Updating Workshops have been offered for Florida Health Occupations Teachers, more recently these workshops have been offered in each of the 5 geographical regions of the state putting a workshop within driving distance of every health occupations teacher. Although the method of delivery is not one that is rated by

Hamilton and Wonacott (figure 1) as the most effective, this workshop is rated as excellent by the participants. A waiting list is usually required due to the popularity of the workshop. The method used at our University involves linking with a major Health Care Agency to provide this opportunity of clinical updating to Health Occupations Education teachers.

Two major ingredients go into offering clinical updating in our program. First is commitment from the University and the State Department of Education to conduct the workshop and second is interest and willingness of the Health Care Agency to participate. Matched together with adequate lead time and an ongoing relationship, the University offers a unique course to any health occupations teacher in the state. Preliminary was the establishment of a course entitled "Occupational Analysis in Health Occupations Education and Nursing Education." This allows us a mechanism to offer the activities as an approved course. This course is also approved by the State Department of Education, Division of Certification to meet the re-certification needs of teachers.

The key strategies and procedures are listed in figure 2. Preparation for the course begins with the application to the State Department of Education for funding. When approved, the dates can be selected and announcements prepared to invite teachers to participate. Participants selected design their own "course of study" based upon their felt needs. Attendance is required at all sessions as time is limited. Participants can become as involved in "patient care" as they feel comfortable. All participants are required to complete a course project

usually involving the development of lesson plans and related materials which will be used in their programs, thus updating their curriculum.

Because the health care agency is highly involved in education, the presence of "teachers as students" does not cause undo problems. The staff is extremely cooperative and helpful to the participants. Many are involved in the lecture series included among the scheduled activities.

With the exception of experiences with fire rescue which are arranged separately, most all activities take place in one health care agency of approximately 800 beds. However, other local agencies have participated when necessary, particularly when special emphasis was requested. (For two participants a local geriatric care center was also used).

Summary:

When health occupations teachers are not able to "quit their teaching" job to obtain much needed clinical updating, alternatives must be found. Although this method of linking with local health care facilities to provide clinical updating for health occupations teachers is not perfect it does provide teachers with experiences that they might not otherwise have access to because they are involved with the supervision of their students. From the participant's point of view, it meets their needs and provides them with useful information that they can incorporate in their curriculum. They feel much more comfortable in the clinical setting after having an opportunity to be in a student role.

Roles & Responsibilities of Health Occupations Clinical Updating

	Identify Need	Develop Plan of Action	Implement Plan	Evaluate Activities
Teacher	Assess his/her needs Communicate interest in attending	Write objectives based upon needs Select areas of health care agency for learning Develop specific learning plan	Complete assigned activities Apply knowledge/ skills to curriculum modification, classroom activities	Evaluate results of his/her update activities Complete evaluation form
Teacher Educator	Develop project for funds Establish dates Announce details and application process Generate acceptance Facilitate teacher needs assessment Maintain liaison with health agencies	Articulate needs of individual teachers c HCA Facilitate matching of objectives and activities with resources Assist with scheduling Coordinate schedule and teachers	Ensure accountability of teacher and HCA Provide leadership Coordinate activities Maintain communication	Facilitate teacher evaluations Ensure accountability to funding agency Ensure accountability to HCA Evaluate curriculum materials developed
Clinical Coordinator	Act as data resources for HCA Ensure appropriate use of HCA	Complete matching of objectives with activities Notify individuals in HCA Schedule appropriate activities	Provide resources, support staff Provide leadership Maintain communication	Evaluate activities for accountability Monitor evaluation process

figure 2

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